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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :  
Harris et al. :  
Application Number: 10/734322 : DECISION ON PETITION  
Filing Date: 12/12/2003 :  
Attorney Docket Number: HARRIS- :  
2

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b),<sup>1</sup> filed on April 21, 2009, to revive the above-identified application.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover

<sup>1</sup> Effective December 1, 1997, the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) now provide that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition filed under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof. In an application abandoned for failure to pay the publication fee, the required reply must include payment of the publication fee.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m);

(3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The Director may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

letter entitled "Renewed Petition Under 37 CFR 1.137(b)." This is not a final agency decision.

This application became abandoned on September 12, 2007, for failure to timely file a proper reply to the non-final Office action mailed on June 11, 2007, which set a three (3) month shortened statutory period for reply. No extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) were obtained. Notice of Abandonment was mailed on December 19, 2007.

The petition is dismissed because it does not comply with 37 CFR 1.137(b)(3), which requires a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The statement in the petition does not track the language stipulated in the rule. A statement of unintentional delay in accordance with the rule must be provided with any renewed petition.

37 CFR 1.137(b)(3) states that the Director may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional. Petitioner's statement that the delay "resulted from litigation between the applicants" raises a question as to whether the delay was, in fact, unintentional. Specifically, it is unclear whether petitioners were legally precluded from filing a reply, or simply chose not to file a reply until they were assured that they would obtain or retain ownership of the application for patent.

Therefore, petitioners should explain the circumstances under which the delay occurred.

As stated in MPEP 711.03(c):

The legislative history of Public Law 97-247, § 3, 96 Stat. 317 (1982), reveals that the purpose of 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(7) is to permit the Office to have more discretion than in 35 U.S.C. 133 or 151 to revive abandoned applications in appropriate circumstances, but places a limit on this discretion stating that "[u]nder this section a petition accompanied by [the requisite fee] would not be granted where the abandonment or the failure to pay the fee for issuing the patent was intentional as opposed to being unintentional or unavoidable." H.R. Rep. No. 542, 97th Cong., 2d Sess. 6-7 (1982), reprinted in 1982 U.S.C.C.A.N. 770-71. A delay resulting from a deliberately chosen course of action on the part of the applicant is not an "unintentional" delay within the meaning of 37 CFR 1.137(b).

Where the applicant deliberately permits an application to become abandoned (e.g., due to a conclusion that the claims are unpatentable, that a rejection in an Office action cannot be overcome, or that the invention lacks sufficient commercial value to justify continued prosecution), the abandonment of such application is considered to be a deliberately chosen course of action, and the resulting delay cannot be considered as "unintentional" within the meaning of 37 CFR 1.137(b). See *In re Application of G*, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pat. 1989). An intentional course of action is not rendered unintentional when, upon reconsideration, the applicant changes his or her mind as to the course of action that should have been taken. See *In re Maldague*, 10 USPQ2d 1477, 1478 (Comm'r Pat. 1988).


Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail:           Mail Stop Petition  
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                  Randolph Building  
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                  Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3231.

  
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